

standards. The first has not been possible in the past and is less likely to be so in the near future; and the second has been found to be totally unacceptable, socially and politically. Hence we have been in an impasse and the situation has been drifting from bad to worse in most areas and in some, even to hopelessness or despair. The question is: is any third solution (or solutions) possible? I hold that there is such a solution which can make a break-through in spite of the limitation on resources and the continuance of the open-door policy. It is this that I propose briefly to outline in the paragraphs that follow.

Higher Education in India : Some Suggestions for Reorganisation

J. P. Naik

The *object* of this paper is to indicate a programme for the reorganization of higher education whose present state of ill-health is causing grave concern to all.

The existing situation in higher education and its causes are too well known to need any detailed or lengthy statement. We have only limited resources to invest in higher education. We are also committed to a policy of open-door access to higher education which leads to unprecedented expansion, now at about 13 per cent per year. This leads to —

- (a) *problems of size*, as in Calcutta University, which make good administration almost impossible;
- (b) *deterioration of standards*, especially in the rapidly growing number of colleges of arts, commerce and law;
- (c) *diminution in the motivation of the students* due to poor quality of education, lack of its relevance to immediate problems, and the ever-widening distance between a degree and a job;
- (d) *students' unrest*; and
- (e) *a spiralling increase in educated unemployment*.

The obvious solutions are two. The first is to secure an increase in investment to match the rise in enrolments and the qualitative needs of higher education in an increasingly competitive world. Dr. Kothari, for instance, has pleaded for an initial large investment, say, Rs. 200 crores or so and an annual increase at 20 per cent per year. Alternatively, one may agree for a policy of selective admissions in keeping with the resources and employment opportunities available and the maintenance of proper

Present Situation

Let us first understand what our open-door policy really means. While we have opposed the idea of making *all* admissions to higher education on a selective basis, we have accepted, surprisingly enough, a policy of selective admissions in several individual sectors. For instance, admissions to medical colleges are highly selective. So were the admissions to engineering colleges until very recently. Even now, they continue to be selective in I.I.T.s and several other institutions. Admissions to science courses are generally selective, even in mofussil colleges. All admissions to good institutions are selective and in some, the selectivity is as high as 1 in 50 or even 100. The post-graduate courses generally admit students on a selective basis. All this is accepted and has become a part of our cultural, administrative and organizational pattern. Hence, our demand for the individual's right to higher education or insistence on an open-door policy means only one thing: *every* student who desires higher education shall be provided access to *some* institution (however poor) and to *some* course (however useless). And we meet it precisely in the same way by creating a large and ever expanding pool of arts, commerce and law colleges (some science colleges also fall in the same category), poorly staffed and poorly equipped, and allow free access to them to all who seek. An impossible demand is thus met in a mechanical or one might say even in an ironically vengeful manner. The victims of this mindless game—the unfortunate youth—look up for sustenance and are not fed. But who cares?

My contention, therefore, is that it is wrong to assert that we demand free access to *all* higher education. *We do not*. It is more wrong still to assert that we are opposed to selective admissions. *We have lived and continue to live with them*. Over the years, therefore, we have evolved our own peculiar formula to reconcile the conflicting claims of quantity and quality. This is to say, we have created a dual system in which there is a core of good, worthwhile and useful higher education (to which

admissions are made on a selective basis), surrounded by a large and increasing periphery of undergraduate colleges of arts, commerce, law (or even science) which are of poor quality and to which access is provided to *all* who seek. This is indeed a vicious dual system which becomes all the more terrible because even the average or below average children of the 'haves' get access to the core institutions while even the talented among the 'have-nots' are often denied it.

Why is it that so patently unjust a system continues to thrive and persist in our midst and why is it that even its victims, the have-not classes, seem to defend its existence and demand its continuance with even a greater gusto than the 'haves' themselves? The answer is multiple and sociologically interesting.

(a) The haves are able to get fairly good higher education for their children because the selective basis of these good institutions is heavily weighted in their favour or in favour of all children coming from families with good social and economic backgrounds. Their fate, therefore, is not at stake. Moreover, they also realize that the small islands of quality to which they have access can be preserved only if they allow a large periphery of slums to which the have-nots are given a free access. Hence they are not really keen on changing the status quo which is to their advantage.

(b) There are three major groups among those who use the non-selective system of poor quality and doubtful utility. The first and probably the largest group is that of the first generation learners. A very small proportion of these has parents educated in secondary schools; but in the case of the large majority, they are educated only in primary schools or are even illiterate. To their parents, higher education is the long-hoped-for dream, the royal road to upward social mobility, the escape from the drudgery of their existence, and the golden opportunity they have missed for themselves and which they feel duty-bound to provide for their children at any cost. Their faith is understandable and deserves sympathy. If it turns out to be tragic and misplaced, it is certainly not their fault.

(c) The second group is that of urban middle class parents who have an *immediate* problem on their hands. They find that their sons complete secondary schools at about the age of 16 or 17. They cannot get a job at this tender age even if there is one available. So they do not know what to do with these young boys and decide to send them to the college as a lesser evil to the other two alternatives open, viz., to leave them on the streets or to keep them at home. It is realised that this does not solve the problem. But 'marking time' is an accepted (and sometimes the only available) technique to meet a difficult situation. In the case of a girl, the problem is still worse. She completes her secondary education

even earlier, at 15 or 16. As the age of marriage is now about 20, her Prince Charming will not come along for another four years. She is likely to be a nuisance at home and cannot be left to her own devices. So she is sent to a college with the additional hope that her chances in the marriage market may also be improved. It will thus be seen that in all these cases, education becomes, not a preparation for work, but a substitute for it. All that the parents ask for is a temporary 'cattle-pound' for their young sons and daughters and they are grateful for getting it.

(d) The third group is of ambitious parents who hope to get good jobs, preferably under Government, for their children. Our entire system of recruitment, especially in the public sector, is such that it has become almost impossible to get a worthwhile job in any sector, private or public, without a university degree. This strengthens the traditional urge for a university degree, based on social and cultural aspirations, through strong economic incentives. More and more parents are therefore compelled to join the race for giving 'more and more' education to their children in order that they might successfully capture jobs at 'lower and lower' levels. As this economic necessity for higher education continues to intensify, the demand of this group of parents for free access to higher education continues to grow.

It is obvious that all these demands are real, socially urgent and politically irresistible. There is thus a strong case for the continuance of the *status quo*, especially because the energy and resources required to bring about a radical transformation are not available. By a tacit consent of all the interests involved, therefore, the existing system continues unchanged and as it grows, all its evils, to which a reference has already been made, continue to grow in magnitude and potential menace.

A Programme of Action

It is to this situation that we need a solution, subject to two important limitations: (1) the additional investment to be made from public funds should be comparatively small and within feasible limits; and (2) every person who desires to go in for higher education should have access to *some* form of higher education. ✓

One point becomes clear at the very outset: if both these limitations are insisted upon, the dualism in the present system will have to be continued in some form. It may be possible to organize, within the resources likely to be available, a fairly compact system of higher education which maintains proper standards and is adequately oriented to the employment opportunities available. But such a system will necessarily be highly selective and hence unacceptable. On the other hand, we do not have the resources to provide good higher education to all who may seek

it. Consequently there is no alternative to the continuance of the existing dual system. But it will be possible to make major modifications in this system with a view to eliminating its objectionable features, improving standards and introducing a much greater element of social justice. Even this would be no mean achievement; and it will certainly be an immense improvement over the existing situation. This, then is the basic objective of my proposals which include the following main programmes:

(a) *Demand for and Access to Higher Education*

1. Expanding the sector of institutions operated upon a selective basis and introducing a significant element of social justice therein.
2. In the non-selective sector, reducing the economic incentives which artificially heighten the demand for higher education.
3. Maintenance of proper standards in undergraduate affiliated colleges through prescription of proper conditions of affiliation and their rigorous enforcement and the development of correspondence courses on a large scale.
4. Delinking of the compulsory subsidy from public funds to mere expansion of facilities at the undergraduate stage and provision of fee-grants to students on principles of merit and social justice.

(b) *Structure of Higher Education*

5. Restricting the work of the universities mainly to postgraduate teaching and research.
6. Establishment of Boards of Collegiate Education for metropolitan cities and separately for each State to grant affiliation to colleges and award the first degree in arts, science, commerce and law.
7. Creation of autonomous colleges on a large and effective scale.
8. Establishment of special research institutes as centres of excellence.

(c) *Content and Techniques of Teaching in Higher Education*

9. Reform and upgrading of curricula on the principles of significance and relevance; adoption of dynamic methods of teaching and evaluation.
10. Preparation of instructional materials, in-service education of teachers, and special programmes of student aid.

I shall discuss these proposals in some detail in the paragraphs that follow.

Selective Sector

Let me begin with that sector in higher education access to which is organized, even at present, on a selective basis. It will include (1) all

university departments, (2) colleges of agriculture, engineering and medicine, and (3) all colleges of arts, commerce, law or science which have established a reputation for quality and in which, because of sheer demand, admission has to be made on a selective basis. The programme of reform needed for this sector is three-fold:

(a) An attempt should be made to strengthen the existing institutions to enable them to function in peace and help them to grow better.

(b) There should be a special programme under the UGC in which a continuous effort is made to identify institutions with a growth potential and help them to raise their standards so that they find a place in the selective sector. It should also be an objective of this preference to ensure that good quality institutions in the selective sector are distributed fairly equitably in different parts of the country.

(c) An intensive effort should be made to introduce a significant element of social justice in the selective sector. This is probably the most important programme to be developed in this context. As the Education Commission pointed out, we do adopt the selective approach in several sectors but have done hardly any serious work for evolving appropriate methods of selection. We place too much of reliance on examination marks which are an index, not so much of the innate ability of the student, as of his socio-economic background, his family environment and the type of school—primary and secondary—to which he had access. Consequently our existing selection procedures are over-weighted in favour of children coming from the well-to-do families so that the good quality selective sector in higher education is practically dominated by the top 5—10 per cent of the social elite. As a nation committed to socialism, we cannot accept this tie-up between quality and privilege and we will have to initiate vigorous measures to ensure that talented children from the under-privileged groups will also have an adequate access to this sector of higher education. To begin with, a large and imaginative programme of scholarships will have to be developed at the secondary stage so that talented children from the under-privileged groups are identified fairly early and assisted to get into good schools so that their academic performance improves and they qualify increasingly for admissions to institutions in the selective sector. The scheme of scholarships in good secondary schools for talented children from rural areas or the reservation of 25 per cent of the seats in public or similar schools of good quality for talented but economically handicapped children are good illustrations of the programmes needed in this context. These will have to be expanded and similar other programmes adopted to secure the ends of social justice and to dissociate *quality* from *privilege*. Secondly, steps will have to be taken to reserve seats, in all institutions in the selective sector, for children from

under-privileged social groups and areas and a combined programme of scholarships and placement will have to be developed to utilize them fully. It is necessary to develop a further ancillary programme under which these institutions will be able to provide individual guidance and assistance to such children to enable them to avail themselves properly of the opportunities provided.

One point deserves notice. There has been a general feeling of hostility in the country against any attempt to develop a group of quality institutions on a selective basis. A careful analysis will show that this hostility cannot be taken at its face value and that it would be wrong to conclude that the people will not support any programmes for promoting excellence which can only be done on a limited and selective basis. What the public resents is the elitism that underlies such attempts, the link that inevitably springs up between quality and privilege, the monopolization of such institutions by the urban, well-to-do or powerful social groups and the perpetuation of their dominance through such educational opportunities. If privilege cannot be separated from quality, the people would rather go without quality than tolerate privilege. Hence it is imperative to ensure that the continuance of the selective sector in higher education is made contingent upon the introduction of an adequate element of social justice. This alone will get it popular acceptance and support. The significance of the programme therefore cannot be over-emphasized.

Deflation of Unacademic Pressures

Let us now turn to the non-selective sector of higher education. Here the most important aspect to be noted is that admission will not be refused to any one who desires it. There will thus be no formal selection or rejection. But as everyone does not necessarily benefit from higher education, it is essential to develop a large and efficient programme of educational guidance so that the young are helped to make a proper selection for themselves; and while every academic objective is to be encouraged, it is equally important to ensure that non-academic incentives do not exert an unhealthy influence on this sector and stimulate unwanted expansion.

The latter is a very important objective and the following programmes are suggested with a view to deflating some of the non-academic factors that stimulate expansion in higher education at present.

(1) It was as early as 1882 that the first Education Commission recommended that secondary education should be diversified and vocationalized so that it becomes terminal for the majority of students who can then be diverted into different walks of life. This is really the key to reducing pressures on university admissions. But in spite of the repeti-

tion of this recommendation by several other commissions and committees, including the Education Commission, very little has been achieved in the last ninety years. Our system of secondary education is still the least vocationalized in the world and it still "fits a boy for admission to a college and almost unfits him for everything else". It is high time that we tried to grapple with the problem earnestly. It implies larger investment, creation of more jobs at the intermediate level, and reducing the large differential in earnings that now obtains between the middle and higher level workers or between those who have received secondary and higher education. From the academic point of view, it implies the identification of appropriate vocational training programmes, formulation of curricula, preparation of instructional materials, organization of appropriate institutional structures and training of teachers.

(2) There is the old recommendation of the Mudaliar Committee that graduates should be ruled out from clerical jobs by prescribing a suitable upper age limit. This, it is hoped, will prevent many a person from entering the university merely to become a clerk. It is doubtful whether such a bar on the recruitment of graduates as clerks can be legally placed or whether it is even desirable to do so. One is not also sure that such a bar, even if it is found to be feasible and desirable, will act as a disincentive for higher education. But it is a pity that no clear decision in the matter has been taken and that the recommendation continues to be discussed indefinitely. It would be desirable to state a definite policy on the issue, once and for all.

(3) A more promising recommendation is that of Prof. M.V. Mathur and Shri R. A. Gopalaswamy to the effect that the recruitment to all the major civil services of the Centre and States (and also to the senior posts in the private sector if possible) should be done at the end of the secondary stage and that the persons so selected should be given higher education at State costs in selected institutions of good quality. The scheme has many commendable features which entitle it to a serious consideration on its own merits. But it will certainly have a salutary effect on the expansion of higher education.

These suggestions are merely indicative of what can be done to reduce the pressures on admissions to higher education. They do not exhaust all the possibilities which need careful exploration. What one would like to emphasize in this context therefore is the need to adopt appropriate measures which will tend to reduce the non-academic pressures which now lead to an unhealthy and unwanted expansion which does no good, either to society, or to its recipients.

Maintenance of Standards in the Non-selective Sector

The main weakness in our present treatment of the non-selective sector is not that we do not maintain proper standards that is not possible at the present level of investment and enrolments—but that we do not insist on any *minimum* requirements and that there is really no level below which an undergraduate college in arts, commerce or law (or even science) is not allowed to sink. It is this that leads to a continuous increase in substandard affiliated colleges. This is really tantamount to cheating because we sell something labelled as 'higher education' which it certainly is not. It may also be described as an exploitation of the simple and trusting parents who often make immense sacrifices to buy this commodity for their children. Without making any attempt to control expansion, therefore, it is necessary to show a much greater concern for the maintenance of at least some minimum standards in higher education that we have done in the past.

Three programmes put forward by the Education Commission can be suggested in this context. The first is to make the conditions of granting affiliation to undergraduate colleges of arts, science, commerce or law more stringent than what they are at present and to enforce them rigorously. The University of Madras insists on what may be described as the most rigorous conditions for recognition and requires the sponsors of a college to collect Rs. 5 lakhs as an endowment fund and an equal amount for land, buildings and equipment. In some other areas, a college can be started with Rs. 15,000 or even less. Obviously, the maintenance of even the minimum standards shows immense variations from one university to another. It would be an interesting study to find out the minimum conditions insisted upon by universities for granting affiliation to colleges and the effect this has on the quality of the non-selective sector. An earnest effort has, therefore, to be made to insist upon a minimum initial financial effort when a college is being established and affiliated. There is no reason why this could not even be made the subject of Central legislation.

Yet another measure needed to ensure at least some minimum standards in this sector is to ensure that each college admits only that number of students for which it is specifically affiliated, such number being fixed with reference to the facilities available. This is necessary because standards are diluted, not only by the initial absence of necessary facilities and staff, but also by large admissions far in excess of the capacity of the institution or department. This is already being done in the science courses; and an attempt should be made to extend the same principle to courses in arts and commerce as well.

These two measures will help to raise standards to some extent and will improve the situation in the non-selective sector where the maintenance of even the minimum standards seems to be nobody's business. But they will obviously have some restrictive effect on admissions. As the basic objective in this sector is to widen the opportunity for higher education and to provide access to all who seek, a very large provision should be made for correspondence courses in all subjects. A good beginning in this direction has already been made. What is needed is a planned and vigorous expansion.

New System of Grant-in-Aid

This brings me to the most important proposal I have for the reorganization of higher education, viz., the adoption of a new system of grant-in-aid for all affiliated colleges (except those for agriculture, engineering or medicine), whether in the selective or non-selective sector. At present, we give a grant-in-aid to the college and cover about 50 to 60 per cent of the total cost of education, the rest being met by fees. This implies that, as soon as an individual decides to join a college, the public exchequer has to shell out a compulsory subsidy of half or more than half of the cost of his education. While I concede his right to join a college in his discretion, I do not see why the public funds should be under a compulsory charge to subsidize his education unless it is in public interest to do so. For instance, if all that the parents need is a temporary cattle-pound for their children, there is no reason why they should not pay for this baby-sitting. I therefore strongly feel that free access to higher education should be delinked from a compulsory subsidy from public funds by stopping all aid from public to affiliated colleges. They should maintain themselves by charging fees within prescribed limits. Such a reform is all the more necessary because the vast bulk of the system of higher education at present are the urban elite and the haves.

Instead, I suggest that the State should give grants to individual students to cover all their fees. The choice of the college should be left to the individual student and fees should be paid at the rates which the chosen college will be levying (I do visualize that the variation between the minimum and maximum rates to be permitted will be as 1 : 2). For payment of fee grants, two principles should be adopted: merit-cum-means and social justice. For instance, fee grants may be given to all students who secure a given percentage of marks, subject to a prescribed means test. Fee grants may also be given to all eligible children from under-privileged groups or areas. We may even say that we shall support the higher education of one girl and one boy from each family, below a prescribed income level. It is obviously possible to lay down rational and acceptable princip-

les of social justice and thus ensure that the higher education of no deserving but economically handicapped student is allowed to suffer because of the increase of fees due to stoppage of direct maintenance grants, to affiliated colleges.

In addition to fee grants, there could be a programme of loans for students who do not get fee grants. One could even argue that there need be no fee grants but only a system of fee-loans.

A new system of grant-in-aid of this type is socially more just than the present one. It has also other merits. It will make open access to higher education possible without burdening the public exchequer. It will improve motivation of students. It will help to improve standards by fostering a healthy competitive spirit among colleges.*

I have left our agricultural, engineering and medical colleges from this proposal. But there could be no objection if the plan is extended to cover them also.

A comprehensive view will have to be taken of the proposals for reforming the existing system of access to higher education because they form, as it were, a package deal. It is true that even under these proposals, the present dualism between the selective and non-selective sector continues. But very major modifications have been made to eliminate its objectionable features, to improve standards and to introduce a significant element of social justice. In the selective sector, access will be provided on an increasing scale to the talented but economically handicapped children, thus breaking up the close linkage between quality and privilege. In the non-selective sector, access will be free and larger than at present. But some concern will be shown for standards, at least to ensure that higher education is not a fraud or exploitation; the compulsion on the State to subsidize the education of the haves or the unfit will be done away with; and adequate financial support will be made available to ensure that the under-privileged groups are not prevented, on the ground of inability to pay fees, from availing themselves of this social service. Needless to say, this will be a tremendous improvement over the existing situation, almost a break-through.

Scope of Universities

I shall now turn to some structural aspects of higher education. These are of crucial significance and unless they are satisfactorily solved, no meaningful reform in higher education is possible.

* What has been suggested here is the discontinuance of ordinary maintenance grants to affiliated colleges. This will not affect the payment of grants for special programmes of student aid which will not only be continued but increased. This will further imply that fees in Government colleges also will be suitably upgraded on cover-the-cost basis.

The universities in India, by and large, are mainly concerned with two responsibilities: they do post-graduate teaching and research in their own departments; and they service affiliated colleges by grant of affiliation, prescription of curricula, and holding of the examination for the first degree. The second of these functions has become so large that the universities are not able to manage it in several cases. Moreover, it is even interfering with the first which is the proper function of the universities. I therefore think that a time has now come when the universities should be relieved of all responsibilities for affiliated colleges, including the holding of the examination for the first degree. This alone can provide the essential conditions in which they can perform their basic tasks of promoting higher education proper.

It may be of interest to have a historical perspective at this point. There was a time when the universities held the terminal examination for the secondary stage and also equated it with their own entrance examination. The system worked fairly well—at least administratively—so long as the number of secondary schools and examination candidates was small. But a point was soon reached when the system began to collapse. Boards of Secondary Education were therefore set up and the universities were relieved of this responsibility which they had assumed for secondary education. The result has been good for both. Over the last two or three decades, there has been so tremendous an expansion in affiliated colleges that a stage has now been reached when the universities need to be immediately relieved of all responsibilities for them also and for holding the first degree. Let us also not forget that our education for the first degree is really higher secondary education and that it may be called higher education only by courtesy. This reform therefore is essential and will be good for all concerned: the universities, the affiliated colleges, and the system of higher education in the country as a whole.

There will be one exception to this general rule. Centres of Advanced Study should have a small undergraduate section (with an annual intake of not more than 20-30), selected on a national basis and supported by scholarships. This will enable them to produce the top-level talent needed for universities, research, and other walks of life.

Collegiate Boards

Who will assume the responsibility for affiliated colleges which the universities will be shedding? I suggest that we may establish Boards of Collegiate Education, created by Acts of State or Central Legislatures, and consisting of the representatives of all universities in a State, the affiliated colleges themselves and the State Government. They should have power to grant affiliation to colleges, to prescribe curricula, and to

hold the first degree examination. There should be only one Collegiate Board in each metropolitan city and State (this will put an end to the competition for lowering standards which universities in a State often engage in) and it should be operated upon as a consortium of all the universities in the State or city, on the broad lines that Prof. M.V. Mathur has been speaking about.

All under-graduate colleges should be brought under the purview of the Collegiate Boards. The post-graduate colleges will have to seek affiliation with the universities for the master's degree courses and with the Collegiate Board for the first degree courses.

Autonomous Colleges

The creation of Boards of Collegiate Education will relieve the universities no doubt; but they will not solve the problem of size, especially in holding of examinations. It is, therefore, recommended that the concept of autonomous colleges put forward by the Education Commission should be adopted on a large scale and affiliated colleges should be made autonomous in the sense that they would be able to confer their own first degree. Apart from its other advantages, this will effectively reduce the number of students who will have to be dealt with by the Boards of Collegiate Education in the first degree examination.

The autonomous colleges may be given an option either to remain with the Boards of Collegiate Education or to affiliate themselves to a university, provided the university concerned also agrees. This is recommended because the association of autonomous colleges with the university will, without throwing any burden on the universities, help the colleges to improve standards. All non-autonomous colleges and all autonomous colleges which cannot be affiliated to a university will continue to remain with the Collegiate Board.

Research Institutes

In view of the vast and varied needs of society, it is essential to build up another set of centres of excellence, viz., research institutes. These will be mainly devoted to research, but should also have a doctoral programme of high selectivity. They should work in close collaboration with universities and, in addition to regular staff, should provide fellowships so that it would be possible for university teachers to work at them from time to time. At a later stage, they may also be permitted to have a small but highly selective section for the second and first degree, the total enrolment at any stage not exceeding 200. The first target may be to have at least one such institute per state. Ultimately, they may earn the status of deemed universities and resemble the Centres of Advanced Study, except

for their emphasis on research and applied research. Since there is already an organization of this type for the natural sciences, the research institutes to be set up in the next few years should be in the social sciences. Every care should be taken to avoid the pursuit of gigantism in any form. The institutes should remain small, with annual expenditures between Rs. 3 lakhs to Rs. 10 lakhs at the most.

All these proposals of structural reorganization of higher education are intended to serve a number of important purposes and to eliminate some of the major problems we are now facing in university administration. Taken together, they will help to build up a number of centres of excellence and side by side, cater adequately to the large enrolments that will result from an open-door policy of access. They will allow the universities to function in comparative peace. With the introduction of the concept of autonomy, the foundations for a real improvement of affiliated colleges will be laid. The development of centres of advanced study in universities and of research institutes outside will provide the pace-setting institutions and centres of excellence which are so basic to any good system of higher education. It would be an advantage to treat all these proposals also as a package deal.

Content, Teaching and Evaluation

The core of education is content, teaching and evaluation, and hence the most significant educational reforms are only those which deal with these basic issues. But the present position is such that one is prevented from dealing with these issues in an effective manner because of problems created by policies about access to higher education and traditional structural arrangements that have outlived their utility and are incapable of meeting present day situations. That is why these problems were dealt with first. While their significance is thus beyond dispute, they should nevertheless be regarded as means to an end, the end being the revolution to be brought about in content, teaching and evaluation in higher education.

The basic issues here are the need to revise and upgrade curricula on principles of relevance and significance and to adopt dynamic methods of teaching and evaluation. A special and intensive effort is needed to produce the needed text-books for all these courses. So much has been thought about this subject and so much material is already available through the work done by the UGC that the problem need hardly to be dilated upon in this brief paper. The reforms recommended earlier will create the basic conditions essential for these programmes. The rest is a challenge to the academic community which has to plan detailed and comprehensive programmes and implement them in a sustained and

vigorous manner on a nation-wide basis.

One important point raised by Shri G. D. Parikh deserves notice. He has pleaded for a large-scale attempt to vocationalize the content of the first degree courses. The lure of the university degree being what it is, he feels that programmes of vocationalization of secondary education will remain weak and cannot provide the only answer. He therefore suggests that we might introduce a large vocational element in the first degree courses as a supplemental or continuation programme so that the two, taken together, may effectively reduce the pressures on access to universities.* This idea with a tremendous potential has not received the attention it deserves and it must really be placed in the forefront of all programmes for improving the content of education for the first degree.

Teacher Preparation and Special Student Aid

Two ancillary programmes will have to be developed side by side. The first is an intensive and large-scale programme of teacher preparation. The need for this is extremely urgent so that the UGC programmes of summer institutes will have to be stepped up considerably. The second is, special programmes of student aid (other than scholarships or fee-grants), especially the organization of adequate text-book libraries in all colleges and university departments. The programmes of guidance, health services, games and sports and national service will also have to be stepped up. State grants should be available to colleges for these programmes.

Some Issues in Implementation

The basic issue in Indian education has been that we are committed to three fundamental values which are good in themselves, viz., equality, social justice, quantity and quality. But as we have to pursue them simultaneously in a situation of scarcity, certain basic contradictions arise. These become extremely pointed in higher education. We have not applied ourselves intensively to think this problem through and to devise ways and means which will enable us to reconcile the conflicting demands of equality, quantity and quality and to evolve a harmonious programme that will be in the national interest and implementable with such additional resources as are likely to be available. It is this concern that has compelled me to put forward this ten-point plan of reconstruction as a basis for discussion. I have not claimed either omniscience or infallibility.

*The Gurunath Rao Ogle Memorial Lecture, 1966

Before concluding, I would emphasize the following :

(1) The problems of access to higher education, structural arrangements, and qualitative improvement are closely linked and the last of these cannot be solved unless satisfactory solutions are found to the first two.

(2) The solutions to the first two are essentially political. The academic community has an initial responsibility in the sense that it must evolve a plan of action which has the consensus of the community in support. But the decisions are political and will have to be taken at the highest level. Perhaps nothing less than a conference of Chief and Education Ministers convened by the Prime Minister will help.

(3) While reform of higher education will have to proceed separately in each State and each university in a manner best suited to local conditions; no action at micro-level is possible unless the basic decisions are taken at the national level; and in this, the Centre has a direct responsibility and positive role because the Constitution has made "coordination and maintenance of standards in higher education" a Central subject.

COMMENTS

(1)

J. Misquitta *

Shri J. P. Naik in his well thought-out and lucidly presented paper sums up the existing situation in higher education in two basic points: limited resources and our commitment to a policy of open-door access to higher education. To increase the investment in education is impossible. To make admissions selective in keeping with the resources and employment opportunities available and the maintenance of proper standards is, "found to be totally unacceptable, socially and politically". The programme of action proposed by him reconciles itself to the continuance of these limitations, but seeks to make a breakthrough in spite of them, thus eliminating their objectionable consequences, improving standards and introducing a much greater element of social justice. I attempt to comment on four issues raised by Shri Naik.

(a) *The Distinction between the Selective and Non-selective Sectors.*

Such a distinction seems to be called for by our commitment to a policy of open-door access to higher education. Shri Naik would want

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